

DRAFT

White River Trace Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan FY 2015-2025



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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** White River Trace Conservation Area, # 8917
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1989
- **Acreage:** 2,044 acres
- **County:** Dent
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

The primary purpose of the White River Trace Conservation Area (CA) is to provide an upland wildlife area with an emphasis on the management of bobwhite quail and other shrub/grassland wildlife on the Ozark Plateau; and to provide compatible public recreational opportunities.

B. Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition of the area is grassland and savanna habitat for wildlife species (particularly bobwhite quail).

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. **Priority Areas:** Dry Fork Fisheries Priority Watershed, White River Trace Terrestrial Conservation Opportunity Area
- B. **Natural Areas:** None
- C. **Other:** Quail Emphasis Area

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. **Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. **Caves:** None
- C. **Springs:** None
- D. **Other:** Occurs in the Scarped Osage Plains Alluvial Plains Landtype Association. This landtype consists of flat alluvial plains and infrequent terraces of the broader stream valleys. Historically, bottomland prairie, marshes and bottomland forests dominated (Nigh & Schroeder, 2002).

III. Existing Infrastructure

- 7 parking lots (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible, 1 gravel lot with concrete pad)
- 1 privy (ADA accessible)
- 1 campsite (no amenities)
- 1 7.27-acre fishing lake
- ~65 fishless ponds (total of ~8.2 acres)
- ~1.1 mile of the Osage Indian Trail (traverses southern portion of area)

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** Electric cooperative
- D. Cultural Resources Findings:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None observed.
- F. Endangered Species:** None observed.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

White River Trace CA is comprised of grassland and woodland landscapes. These landscapes are managed to provide early successional habitat for upland species, particularly, bobwhite quail.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage for quality grassland and woodland communities, provide bare ground for grassland species and control exotic and invasive species.
- 2) Keep warm-season grass density at a level that is useable and beneficial for multiple species, particularly for bobwhite quail in breeding and brood-rearing months.

Management Objective 1: Manage grasslands throughout White River Trace CA in multiple successional stages to provide food and cover to multiple species, particularly bobwhite quail.

Strategy 1: Provide early successional habitat needed for bare ground and thicker nesting cover. Divide the area into multiple burn units. Conduct larger landscape burns on a minimum three-year rotation. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Favor grasses or forbs (depending on the limiting factor in each burn unit) by rotating burn frequency and season. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Manage for quality woodland communities. Reduce the basal area (i.e., in units that have a more closed canopy) to enhance the native forb and warm-season grass understory. Allow timber to grow to larger size classes and uneven ages.

Strategy 1: Conduct prescribed burns on a three-year rotation to control leaf litter buildup and undesirable re-sprouting in areas where fire or mechanical techniques were previously used to reduce basal area. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Mechanically thin closed canopy woodlands if prescribed burns were previously ineffective. Subsequently, manage such areas as open woodlands, conducting prescribed burns on a three-year rotation. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Manage natural communities while controlling or eliminating exotic or invasive species in grasslands and woodlands.

Strategy 1: Rotate prescribed burns later into the spring months, where tall fescue has been most detrimental to ground nesting birds. This will reduce the growth potential of tall fescue and favor warm-season grasses. This will also allow managers to effectively burn early in the fall and provide a higher growth potential for the tall fescue; and effectively spray with a cool-season grass-specific herbicide when tall fescue is more susceptible. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Seasonally spot-spray broadleaf-specific herbicides when it is most detrimental to exotic or invasive species (i.e., sericea lespedeza and spotted knapweed). (Wildlife)

Management Objective 4: Annually provide wildlife supplemental food plots and promote public use.

Strategy 1: Annually plant dove-friendly plots, including, but not limited to, sunflowers and wheat. These food plots will be managed to provide a food source to wildlife and a hunting opportunity for area users. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Plant multiple cereal grain food plots to provide food and cover for multiple species of wildlife, as well as hunting opportunities for the public. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Manage fishing ponds to continue to provide close-to-home fishing opportunities.
- 2) Manage fishless ponds.
- 3) Minimize the downstream transport of sediments, gravel and pollutants.

Management Objective 1: Manage two ponds (on a 100-acre tract east of County Road 2540) for fishing.

Strategy 1: Periodically assess sport fish populations in all fishing ponds.

Supplemental stocking and regulation changes will be utilized when appropriate for all fishing lakes and ponds. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Maintain the physical structure of the ponds. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Control aquatic vegetation to levels compatible with fishing. (Fisheries)

Strategy 4: Add fish cover as needed. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Manage all other ponds on the areas as fishless (up to 65 ponds totaling up to 8.2 acres).

Strategy 1: Remove all fish from ponds if remnant population is found by staff. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Manage drainage area to the pond with minimal disturbance. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Add woody debris for turtles, frogs and salamanders if needed. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Minimize the supply and transport of sediments, gravel or pollutants into downstream areas. Follow *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Land and Waters Managed by Missouri Department of Conservation* (Missouri Department of Conservation, 2009).

Strategy 1: Minimize any adverse impacts to the watershed by observing protection measures during any disturbance in the riparian zones and around the pond. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Use appropriate herbicides when controlling invasive species in the riparian zones and around the ponds. Maintain the existing riparian corridor. (Wildlife)

Strategy 3: Consult Fisheries on all work inside the riparian corridors. (Wildlife)

Strategy 4: Control erosion along the road and trail system. (Wildlife)

Strategy 5: Improve road stream crossings on both county roads and service roads. Work toward the installation of crossings that minimize erosion from heavy equipment (e.g., Articulating Concrete Mat, riprap). (Fisheries)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

Provide outdoor educational opportunities for the public.

Management Objective 1: Increase the awareness and success of habitat management on public lands and promote outdoor education.

Strategy 1: Work with the Outreach and Education Division to promote outdoor skills activities while working with the Discover Nature in Schools Program. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Continue to work with the Master Naturalist program annually while assisting with various programs including Missouri bird workshops. (Wildlife)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

Maintain Department boundary signs.

Management Objective 1: Keep current conservation area boundary signs visible and presentable to the public.

Strategy 1: Conduct an annual visual survey of all boundary signs. Replace damaged or missing signs. (Wildlife)

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

This 2,044-acre area, which was purchased in 1988, takes its name from an old Indian trail running across the southeast portion of the area.

Under the Indian Removal Act of 1830, the Cherokee were removed from their native lands in the southeastern United States and forcibly moved to Oklahoma. Peter Hilderbrand's detachment of 1,766 Cherokees separated from other groups in Crawford County and traveled through the White River Trace Area in March 1839. They later rejoined the main trail at Marshfield.

The White River Trace later became a major route for settlers traveling west. Nearby Mount Hermon Cemetery began with graves of these early travelers.

White River Trace consists of about 62 percent open ground of mainly native warm-season grasses and early successional plant types.

Management of the area has produced quality upland wildlife habitat, especially for bobwhite quail and other grassland bird species, such as grasshopper sparrows and dickcissels. This type of habitat is uncommon on the Ozark Plateau and the area provides a unique, recreational and wildlife viewing opportunity for this part of the state.

Before 1988, the property was used for a large beef cattle operation, resulting in little plant diversity, primarily fescue and relatively poor wildlife habitat.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	% of Area
Grassland	1,049	52
Woodland	791	38
Cropland	120	6
Savanna	60	3
Other: Roads, Fishless Ponds, Parking Lots	16	0.7
Open Water	8	0.3
Total	2,044	100

References:

Nigh, T. A., & Schroeder, W. A. (2002). *Atlas of Missouri ecoregions*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Aerial Map

Figure 3: Topographic Map

Figure 1: Area Map

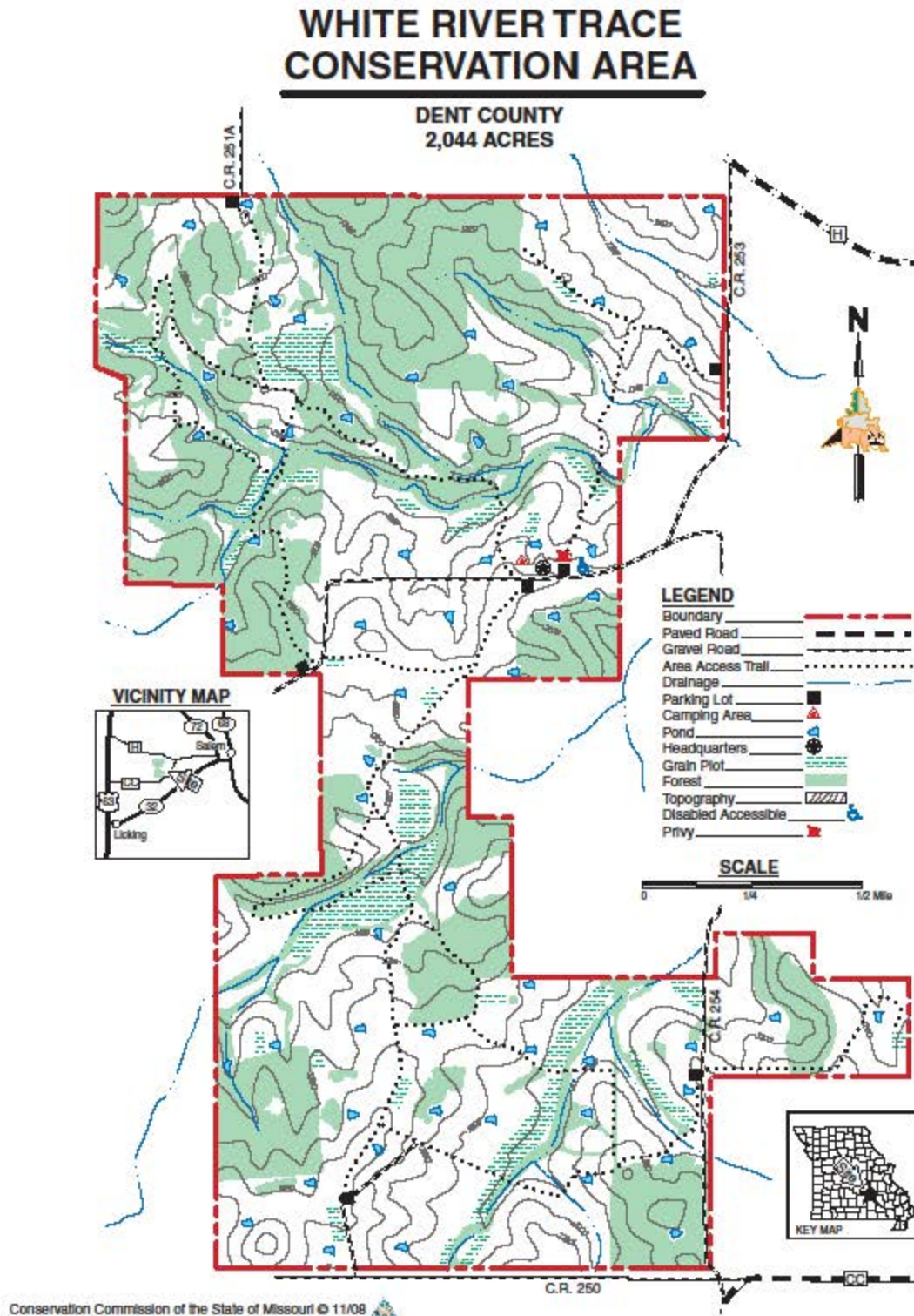
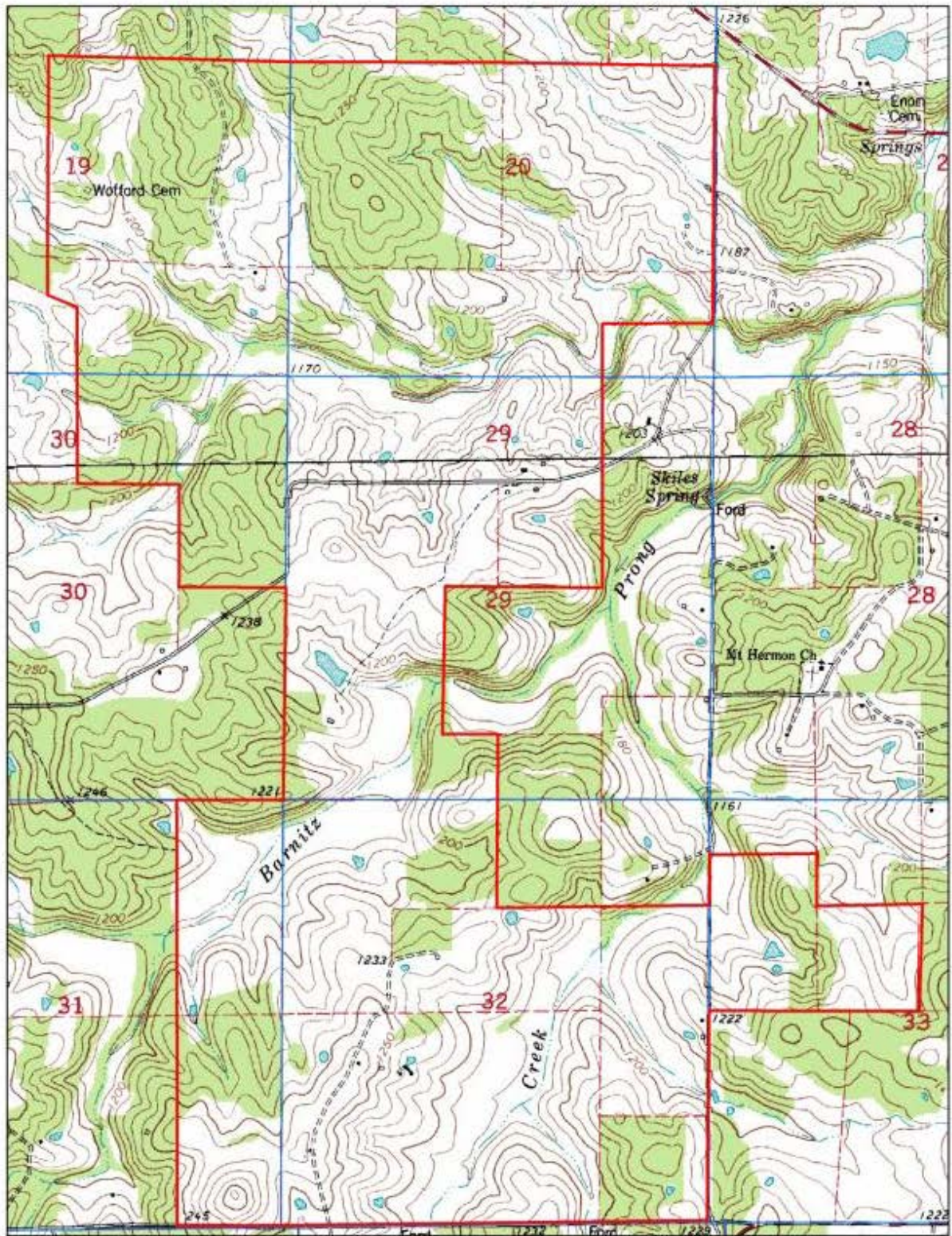


Figure 2: Aerial Map



Figure 3: Topographic Map



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